

Education In A Democracy

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Education is of vital important in any form of government. We have seen by the example of dictatorship countries that the right kind of education is an absolute necessity. They had to have their ideas, no matter how twisted they might be, forced upon their people, before they could come as far as they have. The type of education a dictatorship should have is usually decided by the dictator, and is used to accomplish his individual desires. Education is of no less importance in a democracy. The educational system should be determined by the people, and the goal should be to produce intelligent individuals.

We shall see whether this is the mode and aim of the educational systems in our democracy today. We are not primarily concerned with the dissemination of the truth. There is no discrimination between truth and falsehood. This is very well illustrated by our theory of advertising. The character of the advertisement is not determined by trueness or falseness, but whether it will be advantageous to the maker of the product. We are not even allowed to read the truth in our newspapers, because someone will profit by our ignorance. In our schools and universities, truth is pushed into the background. New ways and new means are sought to make more money or to become more powerful.

Our doctrine of free enterprise, formerly called, rugged individualism, has caused us to become interested in ourselves as individuals. We are not concerned with the generation that will follow, but we are taught to get all we can, while we can and any way we can, as

long as we stay within the boundries of all the loopholes of the law.

The educational systems of our democracy are controlled by practical business men. It may even be that some of our schools have become profit making organizations. These men who control our systems of education are not concerned with the truth. They are concerned with producing efficiency experts. If anyone should try to open the minds of his students to new truths, they will in one way or another relieve him of his duties. Our universities have degenerated into vocational schools. In a recent catalogue of courses offered in one of our universities, I noticed that they were offering a course in lubrication; and that in an institution of higher learning. This is just one example out of hundreds. The conclusion that we must draw from these facts is that the goal of education seems to be in producing efficient craftsmen, and not in producing intelligent individuals.

We shall next consider what education in a democracy must be. Our education should be a sincere seeking for knowledge and truth. The greatest teacher of all times, once said that a knowledge of the truth would make us free. We claim to be a free people but we cannot be free unless we know the truth. True education is more important in a democracy than in other form of government. This is true because democracy is a rule by the people. And since we the people are the government, we the people cannot rule intelligently unless we the people are intelligent. Napoleon once said, "Public instruction should be

the first object of government." It is the duty of every person in a democracy to seek earnestly for the truth and the ultimate reality of things. Today, the majority of our people are not concerned with the grave problems that confront them. Their minds are kept so confused by false propaganda, that they could not understand these problems even if they tried. They have come to the place when they throw up their hands in disgust and say, "Let's just make a 'livin'." When this is the case we no longer have a democracy, but a government controlled by greedy, ignorant, politicians. These are the grave dangers of the educational system in our democracy. And conditions will get progressively worse until our theory and system of education are revis-

ed. Democracy cannot exist when the people are uneducated.

In closing, I would like to quote from Robert Charles Winthrop. This quotation needs no further comment. Although this is from an oration given around 1881, it is still applicable to our day.

"Slavery is but half abolished, emancipation is but half completed, while millions of free men with votes in their hands are left without education. Justice to them, the welfare of the states in which they live, the safety of the whole republic, the dignity of the elective franchise; — all alike demand that the still remaining bonds of ignorance shall be unloosed and broken and the minds as well as the bodies of the emancipated go free."

There Are Men

JANET JARRETT

There are men who can see beauty
In dandelion leaves
Frost-tipped—
Who understand the meaning
Of worms in the earth
That burrow deep.
And the thing they are searching for
In the damp, moist particles
Beneath white roots.

Granted, there are these men.
But how can they pretend
To understand
The me.
Which is neither worms, nor leaves, nor
earth,
Yet is all these things, but placed
Differently
By time.